



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



October 15, 2002

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
Los Angeles County
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**REPORT REGARDING THE ASSESSMENT OF FULLY STAFFING DNA SECTION
OF THE NEW CRIME LAB PLACING ANALYSTS ON DIFFERENT SHIFTS AND
IDENTIFYING FUNDING FROM THE NARCOTICS FORFEITURE FUND**

At the Board of Supervisors' meeting of October 1, 2002, the Sheriff's Department was requested to identify and reserve \$1.6 million in funding from the Narcotics Forfeiture Fund in Fiscal Years 2003-04 and 2004-05, to address the DNA homicide backlog, and to reassess the costs of fully staffing the DNA Section of the new crime lab, with estimates based on placing DNA analysts on different "shifts," which would minimize the estimated increase in equipment and space costs in the new crime lab, and report back to the Board in two weeks.

The use of "shift" work is a creative way to accomplish more with less. However, DNA analysis is an area that is an exception. DNA testing progresses in four major phases: (1) identification of body fluids, (2) isolation of DNA, (3) analysis of DNA, and (4) data review/interpretation of genetic profile. Because our criminalists are also responsible for conducting crime scene investigations and must testify in court regularly, shift work would cause either a reduction in total work product for those assigned to shifts other than days, or it would increase the overtime costs to keep the work product steady.

Furthermore, automation in DNA analysis exists and is in use at the Sheriff's Department's laboratory. Since the genetic analyzers run for 12-18 hours (essentially overnight), the PM/EM crew would not have instruments to work on once the day crew has left. Shift work may be able to increase our preparation of samples for analysis, but the analysis step cannot go faster than the automation we have now.

A Tradition of Service

As for the use of the Narcotics Forfeiture Fund, County Counsel has spoken with the United States Department of Justice, Asset Forfeiture/Money Laundering Division. The Narcotics Forfeiture Fund money cannot be used to pay for salaries unless the position is for new or temporary hires and can only be used for one year or less. After the one year period, the items/positions are looked at as a normal budgeting issue that the Fund was not intended to address. Therefore, the use of the Narcotics Forfeiture Fund for salaries of newly hired personnel beyond their first year would be disallowed.

As for the use of the Narcotics Forfeiture Fund money to contract out additional work, County Counsel would have to write a letter to the Department of Justice requesting an advisory opinion, giving reasons why the contracting was necessary (backlog, inadequate in-house resources, etc.). However, even with contracting out, the one year maximum period still applies.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Chief Paul Tanaka, Administrative Services Division, at (323) 526-5488 or Dean Gialamas, Assistant Director, Scientific Services Bureau, at (213) 989-5003.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leroy D. Baca".

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF